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UNCLAS BUCHAREST 001610

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ACE - DROSENBLUM
USAID FOR AID/OFDA - RANDREW, CGOTTSCHALK, AMAHONEY
AID/EE/ECA - NSTUDZINSKI, MLOPES
RSC/DIR - JKIRKLAND

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [RO](#)

SUBJECT: FLOOD RELIEF REQUEST - ROMANIA

REF: A. BUCHAREST 1031

[B](#). BUCHAREST 1505

[C](#). BUCHAREST 1584

[D](#). BUCHAREST 1609

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: Embassy Bucharest recommends an increase in USG humanitarian assistance to respond to continuing flooding in Romania. Heavy rains and floods that began in western Romania in April have been followed by other, more serious flooding in the south and east in recent weeks. Some 70 percent of Romania's territory has now been affected since this spring. With cumulative damage estimates exceeding one billion euros, the Embassy recommends that the USG increase our humanitarian assistance program to demonstrate our support for this important coalition partner. State, USAID/W, OFDA and DOD are asked to approve additional contributions to this effort as outlined below. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. BACKGROUND: Heavy rains in April caused flooding that was concentrated in western Romania around Timisoara and Arad. The Embassy declared a disaster in reftel A to which OFDA quickly responded with \$50,000. In addition, Embassy asked existing SEED-funded implementing partners to redirect \$500,000 to provide immediate assistance to flood victims. These actions allowed the USG to be the first international donor to respond to the spring floods, receiving praise from both President Basescu and Prime Minister Tariceanu. Unfortunately, the heavy rains next caused havoc in the southeast, setting off additional flooding in the counties of Ilt, Dolj and Teleorman. The Embassy declared an emergency (reftel B) and OFDA again responded quickly with \$50,000. The latest round of flooding caused heavy damage in the eastern counties of Bacau, Braila and Galati. With damage estimates reaching one billion euros from the latest floods, the Embassy firmly believes the USG must do more to respond. More details on damages and other donor plans are provided in reftel C and today's flood update cable (reftel D). END BACKGROUND.

[1](#)3. Embassy recommends a cumulative total USG humanitarian response of approximately \$3 million as detailed below.

[1](#)4. OFDA \$600,000. Embassy thanks OFDA for the \$100,000 provided in response to disaster declarations to date. World Vision, a US non-governmental organization, has been the OFDA-funded partner to date. Former DCM Delare toured Timis County in June to review World Vision's program. World Vision is preparing a proposal to OFDA for an additional \$500,000 to expand their work in all flood-affected areas. Embassy and USAID will review this proposal and send OFDA recommendations. However, based upon excellent past performance and close collaboration with Embassy, we expect our recommendation to be positive.

[1](#)5. SEED funds \$2 million. In May, Embassy and SEED-funded implementing organizations redirected \$500,000 in existing SEED resources to address immediate needs of flood victims in western Romania. Loans were made for families to reconstruct homes, businesses and farms. Both Pioneer and Monsanto donated seeds for farmers to replant crops. (Note: it is too late in the season now to replant and get a harvest before winter.) Flood victims were trained how to purify drinking water and prevent the spread of disease. Wells were drained and purified. Embassy recommends another \$500,000 in current SEED funds be redirected using existing partners. In addition, EUR/ACE is asked to provide post with an additional \$1 million in SEED funds to be programmed through existing implementing partners for similar activities in all three major flood areas.

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